

From: Pacetti, Stephen [mailto:stephen.pacetti@av.abbott.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2008 1:05 PM
To: MLPAComments
Subject: Marine Conservation & Supporting marine conservation and non-consumptive recreational use

Dear Sir/Madam,

I'd like to add my name to the list of people supporting the establishment of State Marine Reserves in the North Central Coast Study Region. Including:

Extend Gerstle Cove State Marine Reserve:

Start From: N38 33.77 W123 20.10

Salt Point State Park, Gerstle Cove

See Image # 200504455

End At: N38 33.51 W123 19.65

South of Gerstle Cove in Salt Point State Park

See Image # 200504461

Establish Fort Ross State Marine Reserve:

Start At: N38 31.24 W123 16.22

See Image # 200504511

End at: N38 30.21 W123 14.76

Between Fort Ross and Reef Camp Ground

See Image #200504532

As a recreational scuba diver, I have been diving the California coast for 23 years. My primary activities are sightseeing and underwater photography. I have seen the populations of green and pink abalone in the southern channel islands wiped out. I have seen the population of red abalone at San Miguel and Santa Rosa greatly reduced until there is just a small population at the west end of San Miguel. In Monterey, I used to often encounter schools of sardines in the shallows and I would dive in the schools. I haven't seen one of those in five years. Similarly, we used to night dive in schools of squid in Monterey. They seem to be gone now. The north coast abalone populations appear to be fairly robust and there can actually be fish life there. At this point, I feel any no take reserve is a good idea. Such reserves serve as sources of mature marine species to spawn and repopulate the surrounding areas. I am hoping we can preserve at least some of the California coast so people can see it the way it used to be. Additional justifications are listed below.

Reasons for the establishment of State Marine Reserves in this Area.

1. Goal #3 of the California State Marine Life Protection Act requires the establishment of marine protected areas for consumptive and non-consumptive recreation. There has not been any recommended Marine Reserves for the improvement and benefit of non-consumptive recreation. These two areas are the most used by underwater photographer and newly certified open water divers.

2. These two areas have roads leading down to the beach where divers using heavy equipment and underwater cameras, can more easily access open water than any other areas in the North Central Coast Project. (Ocean Cove is heavily used by consumptives).

4. Goal #4 of the MLPA call for the protection and establishment of heritage marine protected areas. Gerstle Cove and Fort Ross are already established and protected State Parks. The protection of these small MPAs would qualify under the goal #4 of the State Law.

5. Somewhere in the whole North Coast Project, there should be some set aside for non-consumptive recreational use. These are the two most likely set aside for non-consumptive use.

6. The Non-Consumptive Recreational Use Pattern as mapped by the NOAA National MPA Center indicate that these two sites are most used for non-consumptive users.

7. Research diving at Gerstle Cove by Marine Ecology students of Dr. James Grass over the last ten years, shows that the abalone and other marine life are substantially more abundant at this presently established Marine Reserve and that the abalone is carried south into the next two coves.

Thank you for your consideration.

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